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Described is a training institute for teachers and school community workers who would be working in preschool centers. Trainees spent their mornings doing their field work in a Head Start classroom and afternoons in discussion groups with their instructors. Consultants from various disciplines addressed the training group. The school community workers also contacted relevant agencies who might recommend potential preschool children. An atmosphere of mutual cooperation and communication was encouraged by the institute leaders as a means of developing cohesion, and group dynamics sessions helped to ventilate anxieties and stresses. (NH)

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TEACHING THE DISADVANTAGED

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The Indianapolis Center:
Report on Teacher Preparation Program for Indianapolis Pre-School Centers

By Lucille Ingalls

The Indianapolis Pre-School Centers, Incorporated was initiated about a year ago by a small group of citizens. They recognized the need for providing worthwhile learning experiences for three and four year old children residing in the "inner city" areas of Indianapolis. This group developed an extensive proposal to be submitted to the Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D. C. Acceptance of their proposal provided funds for the selection of a number of learning sites to be staffed by teachers and teachers aides. Within the proposed structure a program for teacher preservice and inservice training was provided. It was hoped that these services would provide ever-broadening educational ideas and methods (based on information gained from the current literature, audio-visual materials, experienced teachers, accounts of other programs, and the latest research) enabling each teacher to become stronger and better able to cope with the myriad of problems related to child growth and development. It was also recognized that such services would be beneficial in any orientation for teachers but certainly *must* be included here.

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Preservice Program

Prior to the opening of the pre-school centers, scheduled for September, 1965, an eight week training session was established in order to prepare the teachers and school community workers as adequately as possible for their work with three and four year old children. Plans were made for the following: field work experience, professional reading, inspirational and informational consultants, exposure to community resources, group discussion, use of audio-visual materials, individual conferences, and a never-ending opportunity for feedback from the participants in order to keep communication going and evaluation a constant point from which the formulation of future plans would evolve. I cannot stress too much the importance of evaluation which is never the end of something but rather the point at which more planning should come into being. Planning is often unwieldy and frustrating when a newly formed group gets together to organize a new venture. It is only when basic commonalities are established that group planning can be carried out. I have found that such planning is now beginning to unfold in smaller groups and should be most ready for productive implementation soon after our inservice sessions get underway.

In order to incorporate the field work into the program, arrangements were made to have the participants do their field work with the Head-start classroom teacher and school social workers. This work was done in the morning. Afternoons were spent in group work for the purpose of discussing topics based on their experiences in the field. Concurrently, for the teachers, the afternoon sessions were also devoted to the presentation of classroom skills covering such areas as language arts, music, art, physical education, science, and so forth. This arrangement made it possible for the trainees to try out the various skills and techniques as they were presented. Any problems encountered could then be discussed and handled as the needs arose. It was posible for each participant to operate at his/her own level of development and through discussion to gain more and newer ideas and to become more confident in working with children.

During this period we also introduced consultants in the fields of child growth and development, community organization, environmental implications for learning, family-school relationships, child psychiatry, language development, and small group work skills. Efforts were made to have these presentations at times which seemed most propitious for group needs and acceptance. Since it was not always possible to anticipate the tenor of the group, whenever possible the speaker indicated alternate dates, in the understanding that due to the dynamics of the group a pre-arranged time might not be the "right" time nor the proper

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What Implications Does The Child Development Center Concept And The Early Childhood Curriculum Have For The Elementary School?

If there is to be continuity in the child's school experiences:

(1) Should the first and second grade classroom and curriculum be more like the pre-primary experience with its consequent implications for a greater variety of concrete learning experiences?

(2) How many children should a teacher be responsible to? What should the adult-child ratio be? What kinds of adults, what type of training or experience should they have?

(3) What kind of behavioral assessment of the child should there be, other than that of his formal school skills and abilities?

(4) What services should the school offer or coordinate in comparison to those outlined in the Child Development Center program? Should the teacher or school be responsible for planning a comprehensive program for the child? What should the teacher's role be in relation to the family?

(5) If we are presently limited in providing the kinds of concrete experiences and the individual, small-group guidance that an enriched curriculum may demand, what are some of these restrictions and what creative ways can we find of overcoming them?

Report on Teacher Preparation Program for Indianapolis Pre-School Centers

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length of time. Of course there were occasions when such flexibility was out of the question. It then became the responsibility of the institute leaders to work in such a way as to have the presence of a consultant be "just the thing" to revitalize the program. In this respect I cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity for flexibility in a program, plus "leveling" with the speaker so that he may feel free to operate in the manner that seemed best at the given time, whether it be lecture, large group discussion, or small group discussions. Such an arrangement played a big part in the selection of consultants. Since we are attempting to establish informal "give-take" relationships in our group, it was necessary to convey this to our speakers and attempt to avoid as many formal *one-sided* presentations as possible.

While the teachers were working on the development of classroom skills, the school community workers met as a group to make plans for contacting the existing agencies which might provide youngsters who could participate in our program. This group also examined various intake interview forms in order to be in a better position to formulate a form which would serve the needs of our group. From time to time these ideas would be presented to the entire group to get its reaction and further suggestions. In my opinion adequate preparation for the social community workers was lacking. Fortunately this particular group was quite self-sustaining, and this has not been a weak spot in the total program. However, I believe that more attention might well have been given to provide outside leadership for them. It certainly will be a very concrete part of the inservice work to come.

The work with consultants contributed a great deal in maintaining the total group effort concept rather than allowing a rather "natural" (teacher-social worker) division to widen to the extent that the overall program might suffer through group cleavage. The emphasis on communication and the encouragement of expression of feelings and ideas was imperative in order to provide the leaders opportunities to offer the kind of guidance which helped keep the group together and "goal minded."

A group dynamics session was held one night each week. This was organized to provide a kind of group catharsis time. While anxieties and tempers were built up and ofttimes resulted in "explosions," another opportunity for building stronger and more understanding relationships within the group was brought into being. It then became the responsibility of all, with major responsibility taken by the leaders, to resolve these problems and once more produce vital understandings among the group members.

Individual conferences were held to encourage more communication on the part of the participants. When establishing conferences, we tried to schedule the "quieter" group members first, with the hope that they might feel freer to talk in a large group. In every case, the individual attention did much to help the self-concept and to once again provide leadership another avenue for knowing the people in the group. It has been my experience that this aspect of a program is the one

most readily set aside and due to time pressures understandably so. However I believe that other more easily organized parts of a program might well be postponed or even abandoned in order to find the time for individual conferences.

After five weeks of the institute had passed, all of the teachers and the school community workers were assigned to the sites in which they would be working for the coming year. Orientation periods were held to brief them on how and where to obtain needed information, how to establish rapport with the host agency, and how to interview the parents of prospective students. During this phase of their training, they were again given the opportunity to be with leaders who could encourage them, help solve their problems, and continue to keep enthusiasm at a high level.

It is at this point that the story actually begins even though we have been together for five weeks. It is at this point that a particular written phrase may come to the fore or certain spoken words will seep through to help work out a problem. From here we all once more look at where we are going, what more we (as a group or individually) need to work on to direct us toward our goals. We may now then gather in our inservice sessions to plan together for future work. Hopefully, we are more ready to express ourselves, more willing to question, and certainly more ready to grow and thereby be better equipped to help others grow and develop, more specifically, some *X* number of three and four year old children living in some *X* community in which we are dedicated to work.

These communities are considered to be "disadvantaged." There is no doubt that teachers working with children from such areas must know the environmental background of each of the pupils in their classrooms. There is no doubt that it is extremely important to work as closely as possible with the significant adults (parents, aunts, grandparents) of these pupils. There is no doubt that a lower teacher-pupil ratio is necessary to improve the learning possibilities for these pupils. There is no doubt that proper and adequate materials will enrich the environment of three and four year old youngsters. Fortunately, monies are forthcoming to provide these things for the "disadvantaged." Now our culture seems more than willing (almost compelled) to carry out a war on poverty through education. It seems to me that educators *must* take advantage of this so-called "disadvantaged" situation and carry out the good educational practices we have been talking about for a long time. Many of the obstacles we have long lamented have been removed in these anti-poverty programs. We are now challenged to do what we have discussed for many years. Good education applies to any subculture. If we can carry it out in the "culturally deprived" areas, perhaps we can become strong enough to educate more effectively in "all" areas.

The Elementary Teacher and the Disadvantaged—Bug in a Tub

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windows were closed tightly, these creatures would enter the house in large numbers. These bugs did little or no damage; in fact, they were fairly attractive with orange stripes down their backs. Their only annoyance was the fact that they were around. The bugs collected on the window sills, on the floor, and in the sink and bathtub. The first morning's task during the siege was to remove the bugs. This was a matter of sweeping them from the sills and floor and flushing them down the drain of the sinks and tub. Then the writer began to watch these creatures in the tub. These bugs possessed a certain fascination for the viewer. It was easy to impute anthropomorphic abilities to these crawling things. Each one continuously struggled to climb the steep, slick wall of the tub. Just when there seemed to be some progress up the side of the tub, the bug would slide back down again. The bug would simply go to another place and start again. When these bugs became exhausted, they would stop to "catch their breath" and start anew. The writer will admit that he began to identify with the struggle of these bugs (actually to the point of flipping these bugs from the tub in respect for their striving and extending their opportunity and time for survival.)

In some ways the bug-in-tub situation is analogous to the teacher's struggling with limitations in seeking to improve instruction of disadvantaged children. The bug did not design his own structure or abilities. Had he done so, he would have had wings. He did not choose his equally limited, floundering friends. Neither did he select the tub to which he found himself confined. Yet the only thing to be done within the confines was to look up and strive to climb the barriers.

The teacher in seeking to teach the disadvantaged is circumscribed by four walls within which he must teach: